Boston, Tues. March 9/58

Dear Webb;

I find myself somewhat necessitated to send you a few lines on a subject which, as I have given no attention to it heretofore, I should prefer to leave to those who know what has been said & done about it, viz: the Mortgage held by J. Griffiths on land of F. Douglass.

There had just reached me, to-day, a certified copy of a legal search made by a Deputy Clerk in the Clerk's Office of Monroe County, in the city of Rochester, N.Y.

These documents are certified to show —

1. Frederick Douglass to Elisja Griffiths. Mortgage to secure $1000. dated Aug. 29. 1849; — conveying a piece of Land, described,

2. John Dix & Eliza G. his wife, to Julia Griffiths. An assignment of the above Mortgage dated 18th April 1851, — recorded.

3. Julia Griffiths, by an instrument dated March 18, 1853, declares the said Mortgage (given by F. D. to E. G, and afterwards assigned to herself) to be "redeemed, paid off, satisfied and discharged". — Certified to be her act, before Commissioner of Deeds. — True copy — certified by the Clerk.

5. The Dep. Clerk certifies that he finds no mortgage from F. D. to J. G. "Since the 29 Aug. 1849", and that there is no other record of any mortgage or discharge to be found since the said Aug. 29. 1849. —

[The whole dated March 3. 1858.]

I should choose to send you the documents

themselves, and they doubtless will be sent to you. But, as they come to me to be forwarded (I suppose) to some other before being sent to you, and as they cannot (I fear) be sent to these others & at the same time get ready to go to you by the Steamship which leaves here tomorrow morning, I have thought it my duty to make an abstract of the documents, & forward the same to you by this earliest opportunity.

P.S. As the Ship does not sail until 2 o'clk. P.M. tomorrow, the documents themselves may reach you. — I may enclose with this a few lines from the person who obtained & forwarded the documents. They acknowledge that in the search originally made, they did not find the J.G.'s instrument of March 18, 1853, to the effect that the mortgage was paid off & discharged; but claim that they expressly declared to H. C. Wright that dependence could not be placed on their search, & that only "a legal search" could be reliable. — I confess that I think them to blame in allowing anything to go from their hands in the case, of which it was likely that any use would be made, if such were not reliable. So much I shall not fail to say to them.

The Rev. T. W. Higginson has desired me to send, through you, his subscription to "The Waverley",

edited by Bessie R. Parkes, 14 Princess
London. He writes me that the price
per annum is – Stamped 10/2 – not stamped
8/. He thinks he should have the
stamped copy; but I understand that the
stamp, on your newspapers, is of no use for
transmission abroad. At any rate, will you
have the kindness to do the right thing, and
pay the subscription whatever it be, and let me
know, and I will collect of him, & credit you
with the same. The address should be –
Rev. T. W. Higginson, Worcester, Massachusetts,
– to commence, as soon as may be.

Parker Pillsbury has been laid up
for the past four or five weeks. He was very
violently attacked with inflammation on the chest
and has been reduced very low. He is now
convalescent, though not yet able to go out
& strictly forbidden to think of public speaking
for several months at least. – Garrison
health is indifferent, but I hope he will get
along without a serious illness. Henry C. Wright
is now in Boston, & vicinity. He is apparently
strong and well. He goes his ways about the work
instructing & stirring the people all he can, & has many friends.

MCS-Bi.6.v.6.p.84

I think, from your account, that our "Bell" box could hardly have been fairly landed on your shores, before a notice was issued to you that it ~~would~~ must be removed or otherwise sold in 3 mos. for charges. I do not understand how it is they get up such a bill of expenses on so small a box, and yet I think it well pays the way to send it. The Bell is a good book in itself. The "Stroud" is invaluable to those who would gain an accurate & precise knowledge of what Slavery in this country is by law. It is a great trouble to you — i.e. consumes much time, distribute it, we very well know; but you have always put the best face on it, and said it gave you pleasure to take charge of it, and we are so clear as to the amount of good to be expected from it that we do not hesitate to send it to you. It is very kind of you to think of giving "extra help" to the Am. Anti Sl. Soc'ty in this pinching time. But you are giving extra help to it all the time, in the Advocate & out of the Advocate, — giving much time, labour, brain-work — and for you to think of doing any more, only argues & proves your generous kindness. You must not think of doing any more; your share is now that of many men. If you do not cast off a part of what you now undertake, we shall be surprised. Pray do not break down under all you have to do. And this leads me to ask, if you would not like & choose to be relieved of some of your Collecting business for Liberator, Standard, the Am. Society, &c. &c. I suppose, if you wished to give up your Scotch & English collecting, we might engage friends in those respective countries to share this labor with you. Say frankly what you would prefer about this. But at all events, don't talk of doing more for our Society. Don't know how you are able, with your other business, to do what you do. I am very happy to tell you, that ~~we~~ we have

got along through the winter — thus far — better than we feared. We have been able to meet all demands, keep a g[illegible] number of agents in the field, — east, centre, & west, — (whose labours were never better appreciated, whose words never more attentively heard, or more effective) — and can, I think, see our way pretty clear for some months ahead.

As to our money accounts (yours & mine, I mean) I think my last note to you, which I suspect you had not received when yours was written, explained what bothered me before.

The extra Nos. of January Advocate came to hand a week since. Shortly before, Walker's missing numbers appeared. They must have lain over, 2 or 3 steamers, or been despatched in this country a long distance in the wrong direction.

Have you heard again from George Thompson — what?

What is the meaning of the course of The Times? This question is much asked here. Some say, Bought by the Slaveholders. But the Slaveholders don't do [illegible] at that, and ~~of course~~ would hardly attempt anything of the sort in the direction, had they any money to offer. No doubt, through American influence in London, a strong pro-slavery power is brought to bear upon it. But the Times aspires to be "a power in the land". It must live after the country — its war — its peace — its trade & its manufactures — it must advise & perhaps dictate the policy of the government — it must keep open the channels of trade, of supply, home industry, — it must encourage cotton-raising, & help to raise more, not less — for British Mills must be kept in operation that there may be wealth coming in, that there may be no suffering, no starvation, no rioting. "Cotton we must have, & have it cheaper", I think, its doctrine. "Therefore let the Slave Trade go on". Then the Times is morally unprincipled. — Where is Grant & the Morning Advertiser? — Do you see Cargoes of Slaves are even now landing near New Orleans? in open defiance of the Prohibitory Laws. That the way it will be done. The Constitution & Laws will be openly defied & broken as often before, by the Slaveholders. Are they not consummate & masterly villains? How do you explain the Times?

Ever Sincerely Yours — Saml. May Jr.

Mss. 8.16 Virg. 8.4